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A
LETTER
TO AN
HONOURABLE MEMBER
Of the HOUSE of
COMMONS;

In the Vindication of
The Protestant Reformed Church,
(as Established by Law) in Opposition to the
Superstitious and Idolatrous

CHURCH of ROME.

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*A Letter to an Honourable Member of the
House of Commons, &c.*

S I R,

IN Obedience to your Commands, I take the boldness to present you with this Paper, giving you a small rough draught of the Nature, and several Models of Government, in a general Notion; and more particularly of the most Excellent Constitution of Parliaments, in which, after some sort, all Governments are Comprised: And how at this Juncture of time, this Parliament may be managed with the greatest Advantage to the Nation, by the unanimous Concurrence of both Houses, in order to Enact such good Laws for the Glory of God, and the Preservation of our *Church of England* (as Established by Law) and of His Majesties Royal Person and Government, and Kingdoms: craving your pardon for my great freedom in presenting you, as my worthy Trustee, with my meaner Sentiments, not any way presuming to speak my Dictates, but my most humble Addresses, which I submit to your more mature Judgment.

All Government (consisting in the due Administration of Justice, and the Subordination and Obedience of Inferiour Persons to Superiour, till we come to a Supreme Authority, accountable to no body but God himself) is of Divine Institution, as derived from God

himself, the Fountain of all Power and Authority, Commanding Reverence and Obedience to the Sanctions and Persons of Governours, who are more or less God's Vice-gerents, as they are intrusted with more or less Power.

Whereupon, they being in some sort particles of the Divine Nature, are styled Gods in Holy Writ, in reference to their Royal Functions of their Remunerative and Vindictive Justice. And it were to be heartily wished and prayed for, that all Governours, and especially the Supreme in all Nations, may truly so participate of the Divine Nature, that they may be like God in those most Excellent Characters of Sanctity and Power, to Influence as well the Souls with vertuous and pious Inclinations, as to Command the Bodies of others by Coercive Laws.

The Supreme Power hath divers Qualifications; and is Founded in one in Monarchy, in the best in *Aristocracy*, and in the People in *Democracy*, which is the worst of Governments, as it is most near to *Anarchy* and Confusion: and therefore Monarchy is judged the best, as it hath most of Unity in it, because all Subjects unite in one King, as all Members in one Head, or as Lines in one common Centre: and *Aristocracy* is of a middle nature, more degenerate than *Monarchy*, in that it consisteth of many Governours; and more exalted than *Democracy*, because it is framed of the Best.

And these being premised, I beg the favour to speak mine own Sense, which (as I conceive) is that of our Nation, That Parliamentary Government is the best Constitution of all, because in it all these are Comprised, in the King, and the two Houses of Parliament, as his Great Council. First, the Government is constituted in the King, as Supreme, and so it is Monarchical. Secondly, in the Lords, as his greatest Ministers; and so in some degree

gree the Government may be styled *Aristocratical*. Thirdly, it is in the House of Commons, as the Representatives of the People, and so the Parliamentary Government in some manner may be called *Democratical*.

Whereupon this kind of Government being united in the King, as the Head and Fountain of it, is most excellent and satisfactory; because all Interests having a share in Government, as they are concerned in the Legislative Power, can give such an account of, and make such an Inspection into the general Grievances of the Nation, and rectifie them by making such sober Debates, and by deliberate Councils, in the matter of wholesome Laws; which being stated, are made first Bills by the Approbation of both Houses, and are afterwards recommended to his Majesty for his Royal Assent, as the Essence of the Law: The Bills of the Lords and Commons, being only preparatory, as giving the rough Draught of Laws, which are afterwards finished, as receiving their Form, Birth, and Life, from the Kings Royal Signature.

Wherefore it is most just and equitable for the Lords and Commons to pay their Duty and Reverence to the King in their humble Addresses to his Majesty, as their Supreme. And I verily believe that the King will again condescend (out of his Royal Inclination to do good to his people) to speak his Returns in his Gracious Concessions to gratifie the just Desires of his Lords and Commons: who I hope by all means possible will endeavour to approve themselves true Sons of the Protestant Church, in being Pious to God, Loyal to the King, and Just to their Trust reposed in them, in the Maintenance of the truly ancient reformed Religion of the Church of *England*, as the most excellent for Purity of Doctrine, according to Holy Writ, and for Uniformity of Discipline as now established by Law, according to the Practice of the Primitive Church, under which the Church of *England*.

land, hath been rendred most happy, (even to the Admiration, if not the Envy of other reformed Churches) in the Reign of *Edward* the sixth, *Queen Elizabeth*, King *James*, King *Charles* the first of Blessed Memory, and I hope it will yet continue for many years, under the Gracious Protection of our now Sovereign Lord the King; as assisted with the Wise, peaceable and healing Councils of the Lords and Commons, now assembled in this Parliament, which I shall pray may be made effectual, as so many wholesome Applications to heal this distracted and bleeding Church and Kingdom; which must be now bound up by skilful and tender hands, lest the Wounds grow wider by their roughness and by unexperienced Medicines, which if improperly applied, will prove destructive to the ancient and well approved Constitutions of the Church and Kingdom.

At this juncture of time, it is humbly conceived to be very dangerous to raise Disputes concerning the Secular and Ecclesiastical Polity, which is the same or at least the nearest to that, immediately succeeding the Holy Apostles.

And I deem it also very unreasonable and of ill Consequence, to charge the humane frailties of the Governour, upon the Government it self; if this Argument were good, a Subversion (which God forbid) might be attempted upon the most excellent Constitutions of Monarchy and Episcopacy, the Pillars by which the Peace and Happiness of the Kingdom are supported in the Civil and Ecclesiastical Government. Nay, if it were lawful to take away the Use for the Abuse of things, Christianity it self, and its most holy Ordinances, instituted by our most Blessed Saviour, may be established, if the great Immorality and Impiety of the prophane, atheistical Professors, should be imputed to that most Holy and Divine Profession.

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Wherefore it is desired by all I converse withal, that the King's Great Council of Lords and Commons would be pleased at this Juncture to make no Dispute with the Governours or Government settled by Law, laying aside all private Differences which (is generally conceived) will tend to the Confusion and Destruction of the Publick Peace ; and it is to be wished, they would emulate the wise Oeconomy of Nature, whose Parts are so well disposed by an Essential Wisdom, in so Excellent a Frame and Order, that upon all occasions they use their utmost Endeavours for a mutual Preservation ; whereupon peculiar Bodies move contrary to their private Inclinations, Heavy things mounting upward, and Light pressing downward, to preserve the Universe, in securing its continued Order from all Interruption and Vacuity.

Wherefore it is most humbly desired by Sober men, that the Lords and Commons would be pleased to quit all private Picks and Animosities against each other, waving at this time all Disputes of Privileges ; that the Commons would be pleased to give the Lords the right hand of Fellowship, as their Elder Brother, and as a High Court of Judicature, consisting of great Persons of Honour and Fortune, the Prime of the Nation ; and on the other side, that their Lordships would be pleased to give the Commons their due Esteem, as Persons of Honour and liberal Education and Fortune, and principally as the Representatives of the Body of the Nation.

And when any Bills shall be offered from the Lords to the Commons, or from them to the Lords, they may have a fair Reception with a mutual Candor and kind Compliance in all Proposals consistent with Justice ; and that all Debates, arising between the two Houses, may be speedily determined by candid Conferences, that each of them always espousing Justice and the Publick Good of the

the Kingdom, by laying aside all Faction, and ill Humour may speak themselves great and good in the Esteem of this and other Kingdoms by a Dutiful and Amicable Concurrence with his Majesty, and with each other; may disappoint the Expectation of our deadly common Enemies, who have no better Game to play, than the Contriving and fomenting Divisions, as well between the Lords and Commons, as the Members of each House; for it is very much feared that the *Jesuits* should so blow up the Wild-fire of our indiscreet Zeal, and first put the two Houses, and then the whole Kingdom into a Flame, which is feared, that nothing but great torrents of Blood can quench, which God of his infinite Mercy Avert, that we may not be made a Prey to our Foreign Enemies: And the prosecution of Justice against the bloody *Roman* Criminals may not be obstructed, who have most barbarously and ungratefully designed to murder a most gracious King, who out of his great Clemency hath highly indulged them, who have spake no better returns than their horrid Endeavours to destroy his Sacred Person and Authority, and subvert his Government, and thereby pull down the best constituted and most Apostolick Church in the whole World.

And it is very much hoped and earnestly prayed for that his Majesty and his high Court of Parliament would be graciously pleased unanimously to joyn together in a well tempered Zeal, acted with Knowledge and Meekness to preserve this once flourishing Church and Kingdom in labouring with all Might and Main to oppose and countermand, through Gods great Power and Grace, Hell and *Rome*, the Devil and the *Jesuits*, and their Party: In order to maintain the Purity of Religion, in the true Profession of Christ's holy Doctrine, and Ordinances instituted by him and his Apostles, and revealed in the Holy Scripture.

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And to Enact such sound and effectual Laws, to corroborate and reinforce by reducing into Execution, those former most excellent Sanctions of Parliament, and when they are deficient to make a Supplement of one or more well digested new ones, to render the Popish Recusant Convict. And in reference to it, your Honourable and Learned late Predecessors, had prepared divers good Bills, which were rendred fruitless by their last unhappy Debates, which is hoped you will avoid, as Shelves and Rocks, which occasioned their Shipwrack.

And it is humbly conceived it may speak a great Advantage to the Publick, to make an Inspection into those Bills, which cost so much Pains, Time and Consideration before they were digested; giving all due Respect to your Predecessors in all which is well done; wherein you will gain a good Opinion for the present, and render your selves honourable to succeeding Parliaments, because sober men are highly affected with the Recommendation of their Ancestors, when they have espoused things of Honour and Justice: And when they are deficient in these, it will become you as, ingenious Gentlemen to be silent in not making severe Reflections upon dead or absent men, who are in no Capacity to vindicate themselves.

Whereupon it is again and most humbly desired by prudent men, who pray for your good Success, that the most honourable Court of Parliament would improve their utmost Power, and most careful Endeavours, accompanied with Meekness and Charity to each others Persons, in making candid Interpretation of the Sense of others, not abounding too much in their own, in giving sharp Reparties, upon the more grave and profound dictates of others, not receiving with Drollery those rational and sober Discourses, which cannot otherwise be answered by their more shallow parts.

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And it is to be wished that all due Encouragement be given to those, whose minds are act'd with great Honesty and Integrity, though their meaner Education hath denied them the Advantage of clothing their hearty and ingenuous Sentiments, with polite and elegant Language.

That every Member may speak himself a Gentleman, and a Christian, by entertaining an humble Opinion of his own, may give a due value to the Parts and Persons of others, that by an inoffensive Deportment to one another, and by abstaining from all ill tempered Zeal, you may keep so fair with Government and Governours established by Law, that all the Members having a great Agreement and good Understanding, may most vigorously and unanimously unite against the most dangerous, insolent, and malicious Romanists, act'd with Jesuitical Principles, holding the third *Lateran* and other more modern Councils, who give a Power to the *Pope* to excommunicate and depose Kings, and conferr their Kingdoms on whom they please; assuming a Power of murdering Kings and Princes, or any Magistrate and Persons of a dissenting Faith, to promote their Phanatick Religion, contrary to the holy Precepts and Practice of our Blessed Saviour, who gave his Commands to render to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, paying Tribute to him through an infidel Emperour, thereby confirming his own Ordinance of Magistracy as God, and by paying his Homage of Tribute (due from him as man) to *Cæsar* the supream Power.

But these *Ignatian Loyelists* do very much derogate from Gods Great Attributes of Justice and Sanctity, while they contend to promote their pretended Catholick Cause and Religion, by most prodigious Enormities of Immorality and Impiety, running quite countre to our Blessed Saviour's Holy Evangelical Precepts, which Refine, and Establish

blish, and no way Vitiate and Destroy the Moral Law.

These horrid Supererogators do seem (with Reverence be it spoken) to out-act the most Holy Law-giver, while by different Rules and Practices, they set up their Own, and not His Kingdom; while they enlarge the straight gate of Heaven, by forcing their Disciples and Profelytes to Enter in by Treason and Murder, and other horrid Crimes, and by giving Absolution without Repentance, and damning them Eternally (as they make them believe) if they make Publick Confession of their Crimes at the time of their Suffering as Malefactors; making themselves just, do in a manner most impiously condemn their Maker) as putting upon him to receive the unjust Criminals into his Glory without publick Confession and Repentance; whereupon they make their Works meritorious, and canonize Miscreants, for Saints, who are justly condemned and executed as Traytors and Murderers.

Wherefore it is most suitable to the Principles of Reason and Religion in a holy Faith and a flaming Zeal to offer our own Hands, and Hearts to Almighty God our heavenly Father, and the Holy Jesus, our most gracious Redeemer, so to fortifie us with the supernatural Assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may choose rather to embrace the gentler flames of Fire and Faggot here, than enter into more horrid everlasting Burnings hereafter; and by his Grace rather to resist unto Blood, than enter into Communion with those Monsters of Religion who eat their God; and most patiently to submit our selves to the highest Torments imaginable, rather than prostitute our selves to the Idol of *Mass*, wherein they contrary to divine Writ offer up the Holy Jesus many times a day, as a propitiatory Sacrifice, who was once for all offered upon the Cross, for the Sins of the whole World.

And I do most truly profess, from my very Heart and Soul, I had rather be Maltreated ten thousand times, if I had so many Lives to lose, and be barbarously made an Example of their most severe Malice expressed upon me in the highest Torture imaginable, (ever resigning my self by Faith and Patience into my Redeemer's hands) rather than forfeit my Soul, Conscience, and Religion, in a base Compliance with them, in their gross Superstition and Idolatry, in the Adoration of the Host, and in holding the Element of Bread and Wine in the Holy Eucharist (after Consecration) to be the Natural Body and Blood of Christ, contrary to all Sense and Philosophy, and the Words of our Blessed Saviour, who calleth the Wine the fruit of the Vine, after Consecration; whereupon we have great Authority to believe, that the Bread and Wine do not so lose their own Nature, as to be turn'd into most different Natural and Corporeal Substances, but after a most Divine manner made the Body and Blood of Christ, which is most really and Spiritually conveyed to a Worthy Communicant by Faith.

And perhaps they of a different Perswasion will rashly judge me not to be a Worthy Communicant, because I am so Uncharitable; which is their harsh Censure (as I humbly conceive) and not my just Errour, because at the Reception of the Eucharist, I do strictly Examine my Conscience, according to rectified Reason, and the more Excellent Sanctions of Divine Writ, as the most exact Rule to Examine and Inform our Consciences by. And if they shall please in Fraternal correction to Convince me of my Errours, out of those most pure and solid grounds of Religion: I do here most faithfully promise, that I will readily submit my self to the Truth, ever praying, that God my Heavenly Father, would be pleased in his Grace to Direct, Govern, and Sanctifie me with his most Holy Spirit,

rit, in the great Moments of his Glory, and my own Everlasting Salvation; that I may learn to quit all my Private Interest, and Judgment, and Prejudice whatsoever, that stands in opposition to his most Holy Will.

And I am sure, that all the Sons of the Church of *England* have so great a Charity for the *Roman* Dissenters, a great, if not the greatest part (the Jesuits and their Disciples excepted) being Persons of great Honour and Justice, and would not do a base thing to gain the World: therefore let us heartily pray, and use our utmost Interest and endeavours, to promote their Conversion to the truly Catholick Apostolick Faith, much better than the *Roman*, falsely so called; and it is highly hoped and prayed for, that the High Court of Parliament would be pleased to Order some most able Clergy to instruct them, as their Spiritual Guides, and to make provision for poor Converts, that they may have all due encouragement to enter into Communion with our Church, and that all true Converts may freely enjoy all the Liberties and Privileges belonging to this, and most fervently praying that they at last may participate of the Eternal Glory of that more Excellent Kingdom.

And because Christ, the most Just and Holy Law-giver, hath commanded us to render to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, let us pay the King the Tribute of our Fortunes, it being our Interest as well as Duty, to support his State, and our selves in his Government; that he bear not the Sword in vain, let us strengthen his Arm, and render him able to Protect us in our Extremity: let us therefore give his Majesty, with a loyal Heart, and an open Hand, such Supplies that are suitable to his Just and Great Occasions, that he may be made capable to Defend the True Catholick Church and Faith, His Royal Person and Authority, and the Laws and Liberties of his People committed to his Charge, in opposition to
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all Domestick and Foreign Enemies, who threaten Fire and Faggot, and bloody Massacres to all good Christians, and an utter ruine to the Church, and Kingly Power and Government, as now Established by Law, and a final Desolation to the whole Kingdom.

And according to his most Holy Precept, above all, let us render to God the things that are Gods; that his Glory may be declared by us in the Adoration of his most Holy Attributes, and in our Obedience to his most Sacred Commands; which that they may be most Religiously observed, let such Effectual Penal Laws be Enacted, or brought into Execution, which concern the strict observance of the Lords Day, and such due severe Punishments may be Inflicted upon irreligious and prophane Debauchees, for Blasphemy, Atheism, Swearing, Perjury, Drunkenness, and other reigning Sins of our Nation; that God out of his infinite Mercy would pardon our Enormous Offences and Transgressions: And therein bless his Majesty, and his Great Council of Parliament, and all his People committed to his Care and Protection: That Gods most Sacred Name may be ever Glorified, and we made partakers of Peace and Happiness here, and Eternal Felicity hereafter. And in reference to it, it is humbly desired by all Sober and Religious men, that the Lords and Commons would be pleased to make joynt and humble Addresses to the King, to Command Fasts to be Instituted and Observed every Month; that Prayers and Supplications be made for the Church, the King, and his Great Council of Parliament, and for all in Authority, and all the People of his Realms; for the atonement of our Sins, and the full Discovery of the Plots, and preservation of the Persons of the *Roman* Dissenters, in their Conversion to the True Christian Faith.

And to this end let us humble our selves in Weeping, Fasting and Prayer, and faithfully embrace that excellent
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Precept of our Saviour, in denying our selves, in the Mortification of our sensual Appetites, that our outward man, by several steps and periods of crucifying our sinful Lusts, be resigned to the intire Dominion of our Soules. And that we may take up his Cross in the patient submission of our Wills to his most holy Will; and in all our Troubles and Afflictions ever kiss the Rod, and his gentle hand of Correction; and by following him in his Holy Precepts and Example, may write after his Divine Copy by our Imitation of him in the Holy Flames of Devotion in Prayer, in a well tempered Zeal with Meekness and Knowledge, in a patience elevated with Charity to our Enemies: ever resigning our selves by a most strong and lively Faith, in all our Trials and Sufferings, into his most gracious hands; humbly prostrating our selves with a filial Fear and Reverence at the Feet of our great and Glorious Creator, Preserver and Redeemer; most fervently imploring his Blessing in all the Offices of his Mediatorship, that he as a King, would Govern, Protect, and reward us; and as a Prophet, would teach and instruct us in the Ways of Truth, Peace and Salvation: And as a Priest, having once sacrificed himself upon the Altar of the Cross, and now sitting at the right hand of God in Heaven, would intercede for us in the Pardon of all our Sins here, and at last graciously present our Soules and Bodies without Spot and Wrinkle to his heavenly Father, at that great day of his coming to Judgment.

F I N I S.